

Orange segments

פֶּלַחֵי תַּפּוּיִז

Miriam's Fish

דָּג לְמִרְיָם

Miriam's Cup

כּוֹס לְמִרְיָם

Leeks ————— כְּרִשּׁוֹת

Maxwell House coffee

קַפֵּה בֵּית מַכְסִּייל

Turnip peels

קִלְפוֹת לְפֶת

Rav Huna's beets

סִילְקָא דְרַב הוּנָא

Items for the Second Seder Plate

Miriam's Fish—דג למרים

To be inserted after discussing the Pesah offering.

A millennium-old tradition, recorded by Rav Sherira Gaon in 10th-century Iraq. He would always have three cooked foods on the seder plate. The egg, a product of the birds of the sky, a sign of renewal and rebirth, represented Moses, the law, the heavens, and the revelational aspects of faith. The shankbone, a product of the animals of the field, a commemoration of the original Pesah sacrifice, represented Aaron, the priesthood, the earth, and the ritual aspects of faith. And the fish, representing the constant flowing nature of water, represented Miriam, prophecy, the waters, and the spiritual aspects of faith.

We read, as Rav Sherira suggested, Micah 6:4:

"For I brought you from the land of Egypt, כִּי הֵעֵלְתִּיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
and from the house of bondage redeemed you; וּמִבֵּית עֲבָדִים פָּדִיתִיךָ
and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." וְאֶשְׁלַח לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת-מֹשֶׁה אֶהְרֹן וּמִרְיָם:

And we read Psalm 8:8-10:

The flock and the oxen all, צִנֹּה וְאַלְפִים כֻּלָּם
as well as the animals of the field. וְגַם בְּהֵמַת שָׂדֵי:
The birds of the skies and the fish of the seas, צִפּוֹר שָׁמַיִם וְדִגְי הַיָּם
traveling the path of the sea. עֹבֵר אֶרְחוֹת יָמִים:
Oh Adonai Adoneinu, how awesome יְהוָה אֱדֹנֵינוּ מִה־אֲדִיר
is Your name throughout the earth! שִׁמְךָ בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ:

And we read from the Talmud (Sotah 11b):

Taught Rav Avira: "In the merit of the righteous דָּרַשׁ רַב עֲוִירָא: "בְּשֹׁכֵר נָשִׁים צִדְקָנִיּוֹת שֶׁהָיוּ
women of that generation Israel was redeemed from בְּאוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר נִגְאָלוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם. בְּשַׁעַה
Egypt. When they would go out to draw water, the שְׁהוֹלְכוֹת לְשֹׂאֵב מַיִם, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְזַמֵּן
Holy Blessed One would make for them small fishes לָהֶם דָּגִים קְטַנִּים בְּכַדִּיהֶן, וְשׁוֹאֲבוֹת מִחֲצָה מַיִם
in their pails, and they would draw half water and וּמִחֲצָה דָּגִים, וּבְאוֹת וְשׁוֹפְתוֹת שְׁתֵּי קַדִּירוֹת,
half fishes and would come home and pour two pots אַחַת שֶׁל חֲמִין וְאַחַת שֶׁל דָּגִים."

– one of boiling water and one of fish."

Items for the Second Seder Plate

Leeks ————— כְּרִשּׁוֹת

To be inserted before reciting Dayenu.

An old Persian tradition involves hitting each other with leeks during the recitation of *Dayenu*. Nowadays this is replaced with a gentle tap with a scallion for safety reasons. What does this represent?

In Numbers chapter 11, the Israelites complain about missing the food they "used to at freely in Egypt – the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic." Let us remember that our leeks were not free – they were paid for in the slavedrivers' whips.

Sifrei Bamidbar 87 says:

This is like if a king of flesh and blood entrusts his son to a pedagogue. He would sit on the throne and command him thus: "Please see that he does not eat any bad food nor drinks any bad drink!" And with all this, the son would grow angry at his father, saying, "It's not because he loves me, but because he makes it impossible for me to eat!"

מֶשֶׁל לְמֶלֶךְ בֶּשָׂר וְדָם שֶׁמָסַר בְּנוֹ לְפִדְגוֹג, וְהָיָה יוֹשֵׁב וּמַפְקִדוֹ וְאוֹמֵר לוֹ: "הִנְרָאָה שְׂלֵא יֹאכַל מֵאֲכָל רָ, וְלֹא יִשְׁתֶּה מִשְׁקָה רָע!" וּבְכָל כֶּךָ הָיָה הֶבֶן הָהוּא מִתְרָאֵם עַל אָבִיו, לוֹמֵר, "לֹא מִפְּנֵי שְׂאוּהִבְנִי אֶלָּא שְׂאִי אֶפְשָׁר לוֹ שְׂאֲכֹל!"

May we avoid letting nostalgia filter our past, and remember that there's no such thing as a free lunch. May we be satiated rather than gluttonous, and may that be enough for us.

To remind us what's really important, we read the final verses of Song of Songs 8:11–14.

"Solomon had a vineyard in the Town of Plenty, he put guards at the vineyard; each man would bring from its fruit a thousand silver coins. My vineyard is my own; have your thousands, Solomon, your two hundred guardians of fruit!"

"O dweller in the gardens, friends are listening for your voice – let me hear it!"

"Hurry, my love, and be as a gazelle or a fawn of the deer, upon the mountains of spices."

כָּרֵם הָיָה לְשִׁלְמוֹהַ בְּבֶעַל הַמִּזְוֵן נָתַן אֶת־
הַכָּרֵם לְנֹטְרִים אִישׁ יָבֵא בְּפָרִיו אֶלֶף
כֶּסֶף: כָּרְמִי שְׁלִי לְפָנַי הָאֵלֶּף לְךָ שִׁלְמוֹהַ
וּמֵאֲתָיִים לְנֹטְרִים אֶת־פָּרִיו:
הִיוֹשֵׁבֶת בְּגִנּוֹת חֲבֵרִים מְקַשִּׁיבִים לְקוֹלְךָ
הַשְׁמִיעֵנִי: בָּרַח | דּוֹדִי וְדִמְהֵ־לְךָ לְצִבִּי
אוֹ לְעֹפֶרֶת הָאֵילִים עַל הָרֵי בְשָׁמִים:

Items for the Second Seder Plate

Rav Huna's beets—סילקא דרב הונא

To be inserted right before the second washing, as we prepare for the meal.

We read from the Talmud (Pesachim 114b):

What are two cooked foods [that fulfill the Passover obligation]? Rav Huna said, 'beets and rice.' Rava would always look for beets and rice, since this ruling came from the mouth of Rav Huna.

מאי שני תבשילין? אמר רב הונא, "סילקא וארוזא." רבא הוה מהדר אסלקא וארוזא, הוואיל ונפק מפומיה דרב הונא.

Current Ashkenazi practice no longer eats rice on Pesah. But beets, here represented with red *khreyn* (ground horseradish and beet puree) are still a standard part of many a Seder meal.

The color of beets, which never leaves our hands, symbolizes the teachings of the sages, which are still passed down. And the redness symbolizes the blood of the covenant, still there after all these years.

So we quote, just as does the traditional text of the Haggadah, Ezekiel 16:6, whose repeated final phrase is said to represent the blood of the Pesah sacrifice and the blood of the covenant with Abraham.

And I passed over you and I saw you soiled in your blood
And I said to you, "Through your blood you will live,"
and I said to you, "Through your blood you will live!"

ואעבר עליך ואראך
מתבוססת בדם מין
ואמר לך בדם מין תחי
ואמר לך בדם מין תחי:

And we will also read another Talmudic passage, not for any symbolic reason, but because you deserve to hear it.

(Berakhot 39a)

Rav Hisda said, "Cooked beets are great for the heart, good for the eyes, and, all the more so, good for the intestines." Abaye said, "That's when the dish sits bubbling on the stove and going *tukh tukh*."

אמר רב חסדא, "תבשיל של תרדין יפה ללב וטוב לעינים וכל שכן לבני מעים." אמר אביי, "והוא דיתב אבי תפי ועבד תוד תוד!"

Items for the Second Seder Plate

Orange segments — פֶּלַחִי תְּפוּי"ז

To be inserted near the end of the meal.

In the early 1980s, while speaking at Oberlin College Hillel, Susannah Heschel was introduced to an early feminist *haggadah* that suggested adding a crust of bread on the seder plate, as a sign of solidarity with Jewish lesbians (suggesting that there's as much room for a lesbian in Judaism as there is for a crust of bread on the seder plate).

Heschel felt that to put bread on the seder plate would be to accept that Jewish lesbians and gay men violate Judaism like *hametz* violates Passover. So, at her next seder, she chose an orange as a symbol of inclusion of gays and lesbians and others who are marginalized within the Jewish community. She offered the orange as a symbol of the fruitfulness for all Jews when lesbians and gay men are contributing and active members of Jewish life. In addition, each orange segment had a few seeds that had to be spit out—a gesture of spitting out, repudiating the homophobia of Judaism.

While lecturing, Heschel often mentioned her custom as one of many feminist rituals that have been developed in the last twenty years. She writes,

"Somehow, though, the typical patriarchal maneuver occurred: my idea of an orange and my intention of affirming lesbians and gay men were transformed. Now the story circulates that a **man** said to me that a woman belongs on the *bimah* as an orange on the seder plate. A woman's words are attributed to a man, and the affirmation of lesbians and gay men is erased. Isn't that precisely what's happened over the centuries to women's ideas?"

(from Ritualwell – <https://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/orange-seder-plate>)

We began our story by saying "*Let **all** who are hungry come and eat.*" The term "**all**" has no exceptions. The Book of Isaiah (56:7-8) said this loud and clear over two thousand years ago.

"And I will bring them to My Holy Mountain, and cause them to rejoice in My House of Prayer; their offerings and sacrifices I desire on My altar. For My house will be called a House of Prayer for all peoples."

Thus says *Adonai Elohim*, gathering the remnants of Israel: "Yet more I will gather upon to the gathered."

וְהֵבִיאוּתִּים אֶל-הַר קֹדְשִׁי וְשִׂמְחָתִים
בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּת עוֹלָתֵיהֶם וּזְבַחֵיהֶם
לְרָצוֹן עַל-מִזְבְּחִי כִּי בֵיתִי בֵּית-
תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא לְכָל-הָעַמִּים:
נֵאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה מְקַבֵּץ נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
עוֹד אֶקְבֹּץ עָלָיו לְנִקְבְּצָיו:

Items for the Second Seder Plate

Maxwell House coffee — קפה בית מַכְסוּיִל

To be inserted directly before tsafon.

Why is this coffee different from all other coffees? Because Maxwell House coffee is a deeply spiritual representation of the Diaspora experience.

Wait – let me explain! I'll use the classic PaRDeS method of exegesis, explaining the literal *pshat*, the deeper *drash*, the allegorical *remez*, and the metaphysical *sod*.

Of course, *pshat*-wise the Maxwell House Haggadah is a classic piece of Jewish Americana – one of the first, and most successful, publicity campaigns targeted at a Jewish demographic. But for a deeper *drash* meaning, we should consider why it is that you know you're part of American society when ads start targeting you. We celebrate the Maxwell House Haggadah as an icon of "acceptance," but it's really an icon of exploitation. And should we accept that, gulping it down like terrible, terrible coffee? And for a *remez* let us continue down that path. The below is an allegory adapted from a Talmudic discussion on the use of two-year bitter lettuce as *maror*:

(Pesachim 39a):

Why are the Egyptians likened to *maror*? To tell you, just as *maror* starts out sweet but ends up harsh, so too the Egyptians started out sweet and ended up harsh.

לָמָּה נִמְשְׁלוּ מִצְרַיִם כְּמָרֹר? לֹאֲמַר לָךְ, מֵה מָרֹר
זֶה שֶׁתְּחַלְתּוּ רֵדָה וְסוּפוֹ קָשָׁה, אֶף מִצְרַיִם תְּחַלְתּוּ
רַבָּה וְסוּפוֹ קָשָׁה.

Although Ashkenazi communities don't use bitter lettuce for *maror* anymore, we can continue this logic. Maxwell House takes something as delicious as coffee and destroys it by making it harsh and bitter – teaching us never to take our safety and prosperity for granted!

And finally, for the *sod*, we shall go to the old classic – an acrostic. What is Maxwell House? The house of *Mem-Kaf-Samekh-Vav-Yod-Lamed*. This is an acronym for some of the places most notorious for bitterness and hatred. May we avoid a house of hatred, just as we avoid cheap coffee! For each place listed, let's spill out a sip of whatever after-dinner drink we're enjoying.

	<i>M</i> itzrayim	Egypt	מִצְרַיִם
	<i>K</i> ittim	Rome	כְּתִים
	<i>S</i> 'dom	Sodom	סְדֹם
	<i>V</i> a-Amorah	and Gomorrah	וְעִמּוֹרָה
	<i>Y</i> avan	Greece	יוֹן
	<i>L</i> ot	Moab and Ammon	לֹט

Items for the Second Seder Plate

Turnip peels — קלפות לפת

To be inserted with the door open, upon pouring the Cup of Elijah

We read the text below.

Pearl Benisch... remembers Passover in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany in the spring of 1945, just days before her liberation.

“We had nothing to eat but watery soup, with bread once a week,” she told me in a very quiet voice.

“But I was one of the lucky ones. I was working in a place where we peeled potatoes and turnips. I cut three turnips in narrow rounds, covered them up with a piece of brown paper and hid them in my shoes.

“When we had our Seder in the peeling room with one woman keeping watch for the guards, the other women moaned that there was no matzo. I said, ‘they are here, they are under the cover.’ They opened the brown paper and there were the three round turnip matzos.”

Then, Mrs. Benisch, now in her late 80’s, paused and said in a whisper, “Only God can make matzo from turnips.”

(Joan Nathan, 'Bread of Freedom in Times of Despair,' the New York Times, 16 April 2008)

The rabbis say that Pesah, the time of the redemption from Egypt, will eventually be the time of the redemption of the earth upon the arrival of the messianic age. When a society as cruel as Pharaoh arose and sought to destroy our people, when the ultimate redemption seemed as far off as ever, we remembered this. Let us remember them as well. Traditional Haggadot include the next three verses. The fourth has been added to end on a more positive, hopeful note.

Psalms 79:6-7	Pour out Your anger on the nations who do not know You, and on the empires who do not call Your name! For they have devoured Jacob and desolated his abode!	שִׁפְךָ חֲמַתְךָ אֶל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדְעוּךָ וְעַל מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא קָרְאוּ: כִּי אָכַל אֶת-יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת-נִוְהוֹ הִשְׁמִי:
Psalms 69:25	Pour upon them Your fury, and may Your hot anger overtake them!	שִׁפְךָ-עֲלֵיהֶם זַעַמְךָ וַחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ יִשְׁיגֵם:
Lament- ations 3:66	Pursue them in anger, and destroy them under the heavens of Adonai!	תִּרְדָּף בְּאַף וְתִשְׁמִידֵם מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיִ יְהוָה:
Judges 5:31	Thus may your enemies perish, Adonai, but may those who love you be as the sun rising in its glory!	כֵּן יֵאבְדוּ כָל-אוֹיְבֵיךָ יְהוָה וְאַהֲבֶיךָ כַּצֹּאת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּגִבְרָתוֹ

Items for the Second Seder Plate

Miriam's Cup — כוס למרים

To be inserted after Elijah's Cup, while the door remains open

We read from the Talmud (Ta'anit 9a):

Rabbi Yosi son of Rabbi Yehuda says: "Three good sustainers arose for Israel. These are they: Moses and Aaron and Miriam. And three good gifts were given because of them, and these are they: well, and cloud, and manna. The well was given in merit of Miriam...

Miriam died and the well ceased, as it is written (Numbers 20:1-2) "And Miriam died there," and it says right afterwards "and there was no water for the community."

רבי יוסי בן רבי יהודה אומר: "שלושה פְּרָנְסִים טובים עָמְדוּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. אֵלֵינוּ הֵן: מֹשֶׁה, וְאַהֲרֹן, וּמִרְיָם. וְשְׁלוֹשׁ מַתָּנוֹת טוֹבוֹת נִתְּנוּ עַל יָדָם, וְאֵלֵינוּ הֵן: בְּאֵר, וְעָנָן, וּמָן. בְּאֵר בְּזִכְרוֹת מִרְיָם...

מֵתָה מִרְיָם נִסְתַּלַּק הַבְּאֵר, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וַתָּמָת שָׁם מִרְיָם וַיִּכְתֵּיב בַּתְּרִיחַ וְלֹא־הָיָה מַיִם לַעֲדָה."

We fill Miriam's Cup with water, and recite together:

ZOT KOS MIRYAM HA-N'VIAH.

Z'KHURAH L-TOVAH!

זאת כוס מרים הנביאה.

זכורה לטובה!

This is the cup of Miriam the Prophet.

May she be remembered for goodness!

Miriam the Prophet
She who sang "Triumph, triumph!"
In her merit we drew water
From the wellsprings of salvation.
As it was, on that day,
She will dance with us
And bring us tidings of redemption,
New and complete.

Miryam ha-N'viah
Az tashir ki ga'oh ga'ah
Bi-zkhutah sha'avnu mayim
Mi-ma'aynei ha-y'shuah.
Kshe-hayah ba-yom ha-hu
T'holel imanu
U-t'vaser lanu g'ulah
Hdashah u-sh'leimah

מִרְיָם הַנְּבִיָּאָה
אֲזַ תִּשִּׁיר כִּי גָאָה גָאָה
בְּזִכְרוֹתֶיהָ שָׁאֲבָנוּ מַיִם
מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְּשׁוּעָה
כְּשֶׁהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
תְּחַלֵּל עִמָּנוּ
וַתְּבַשֵּׂר לָנוּ גְּאֻלָּה
חֲדָשָׁה וּשְׁלֵמָה